

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 038203
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:SSOBER:SEB
APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY
NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.
P:MR. HABIB
NSC:WQUANDT
S/S-O:JTHYDEN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM NIACT IMMEDIATE
USLO RIYADH NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 038203

NODIS
FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EG, SA, IS, US

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST AIRCRAFT

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT BY SECRETARY VANCE ON
SALES OF AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL, EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA THAT
WILL BE RELEASED BY THE DEPARTMENT AT 1:15 P.M. ON FEBRUARY
14. YOU SHOULD PROVIDE COPY OF TEXT TO HOST GOVERNMENT IN
ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS SENT SEPTEL.

SECRET

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2. BEGIN TEXT:

CONSISTENT WITH OUR POLICY THAT ARMS TRANSFERS WILL BE
USED TO PROMOTE OUR NATIONAL SECURITY AND THAT OF OUR CLOSE
FRIENDS, I HAVE RECOMMENDED TO THE PRESIDENT AND HE HAS
APPROVED SALES OF CERTAIN AIRCRAFT TO ISRAEL, EGYPT AND
SAUDI ARABIA, SUBJECT TO THE USUAL CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW.
NEXT WEEK WE WILL BEGIN THE OFFICIAL PROCESS OF INFORMING
AND CONSULTING WITH THE CONGRESS. THE FORMAL NOTIFICATIONS
WILL NOT BE SUBMITTED UNTIL AFTER THE EASTER RECESS IN ORDER

TO GIVE CONGRESS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW FULLY THE PROPOSED SALES. THESE SALES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL YEARS. DECIDING TO MAKE THE SALES WAS A VERY COMPLEX DECISION, AND I WANT TO SHARE OUR THOUGHTS FULLY ON THIS MATTER WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

WE ARE AWARE OF THE VIEW THAT ANY NEW AIRCRAFT SALES TO THIS REGION MUST BE SEEN IN THE CONTEXT OF BOTH THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND OUR OBJECTIVE OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT. WE HAVE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY THIS ASPECT OF THE MATTER AND CONCLUDED THAT OUR INTERESTS IN MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND SECURITY WILL BE BEST SERVED IF WE GO FORWARD WITH SOME PART OF THE AIRCRAFT SALES REQUESTED BY THESE COUNTRIES.

OUR COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY HAS BEEN AND REMAINS FIRM. ISRAEL MUST HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN ITS ABILITY TO ASSURE ITS OWN DEFENSE. IN PARTICULAR, THIS MEANS ISRAEL MUST BE ABLE TO PLAN FOR THE CONTINUED MODERNIZATION OF ITS AIR FORCE. THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION GIVES PARTICULAR EMPHASIS TO THESE POINTS.

EGYPT, TOO, MUST HAVE REASONABLE ASSURANCE OF ITS ABILITY
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TO DEFEND ITSELF IF IT IS TO CONTINUE THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH CONFIDENCE. WHEN PRESIDENT SADAT MADE HIS COURAGEOUS DECISION SEVERAL YEARS AGO TO FOLLOW A COURSE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS THAT INVOLVED A CHANGE IN HIS COUNTRY'S RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, HE LOST HIS MAJOR SOURCE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY THE CASE IN EGYPTIAN DEFENSIVE AIRCRAFT CAPABILITY. WE BELIEVE WE HAVE A BASIC INTEREST IN RESPONDING TO EGYPT'S LEGITIMATE NEEDS.

SAUDI ARABIA IS OF IMMENSE IMPORTANCE IN PROMOTING A COURSE OF MODERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST--WITH RESPECT TO PEACEMAKING AND OTHER REGIONAL INITIATIVES--AND MORE BROADLY IN WORLD AFFAIRS, AS IN PETROLEUM AND FINANCIAL POLICY. THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT HAS A LEGITIMATE REQUIREMENT TO MODERNIZE ITS VERY LIMITED AIR DEFENSES. FOR SEVERAL YEARS, WE AND THEY HAVE RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO MODERNIZE THEIR AIR FORCE WITH AN ADVANCED INTERCEPTOR. THEY HAVE ASKED FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF F-15S, THE FIRST OF WHICH WOULD NOT BE DELIVERED FOR SEVERAL YEARS. WE BELIEVE THEIR REQUEST IS REASONABLE AND IN OUR INTEREST TO FULFILL.

WE HAVE CONCLUDED, THEREFORE, THAT THE SALES OF THESE AIRCRAFT TO THE COUNTRIES IN QUESTION WILL HELP TO MEET THEIR LEGITIMATE SECURITY REQUIREMENTS, WILL NOT ALTER THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE REGION, AND WILL BE

CONSISTENT WITH THE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE OF A JUST AND
LASTING PEACE.

ACCORDINGLY, THE ADMINISTRATION PLANS TO NOTIFY CONGRESS

OF OUR INTENT TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING SALES:

-- FOR ISRAEL, 15 F-15S, IN ADDITION TO THE 25 PREVIOUSLY
SOLD, AND 75 F-16S.

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-- FOR EGYPT, 50 F-5S.

-- FOR SAUDI ARABIA, 60 F-15S.

WE WILL BE SIGNING CONTRACTS FOR THESE AIRCRAFT OVER
THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS. THESE SALES WILL BE CONSISTENT
WITH THE PRESIDENT'S GLOBAL ARMS TRANSFER POLICY AND WILL
BE WITHIN THE DOLLAR VOLUME CEILING THAT HE HAS ESTABLISH
ED. THE DETAILS WILL BE REPORTED TO CONGRESS WHEN THE
STATUTORY NOTIFICATIONS ARE PROVIDED.

ALL OF THESE SALES ARE DIRECTLY SUPPORTIVE OF OUR
OVERALL OBJECTIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST. MEMBERS OF THE
ADMINISTRATION WILL BE TESTIFYING BEFORE A NUMBER OF
CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES IN SUPPORT OF THIS PACKAGE SO
THAT CONGRESS WILL HAVE FULL OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE ITS JUDG
MENT DURING THE PERIOD OF ITS REVIEW. END TEXT. VANCE

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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